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## Tessa Downey Delivers the Win in the Palm Beach International Academy North American Junior Equitation Championships

On the final day of the Equitation Weekend, presented by [BIGEQ.com](#), during the 30th anniversary of Capital Challenge Horse Show, 150 riders rode into The Show Place Arena at Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, MD, for the [Palm Beach International Academy \(PPIA\)](#) North American Junior Equitation Championships. After a callback for the top 20 and a work-off for the top two, Tessa Downey, 18, of Houston, TX, emerged victorious. Maddie Tosh, 17, of Milton, GA finished as the reserve champion, and Amira Kettaneh, 18, of Hollis, NH, rode Gossip SA to third.

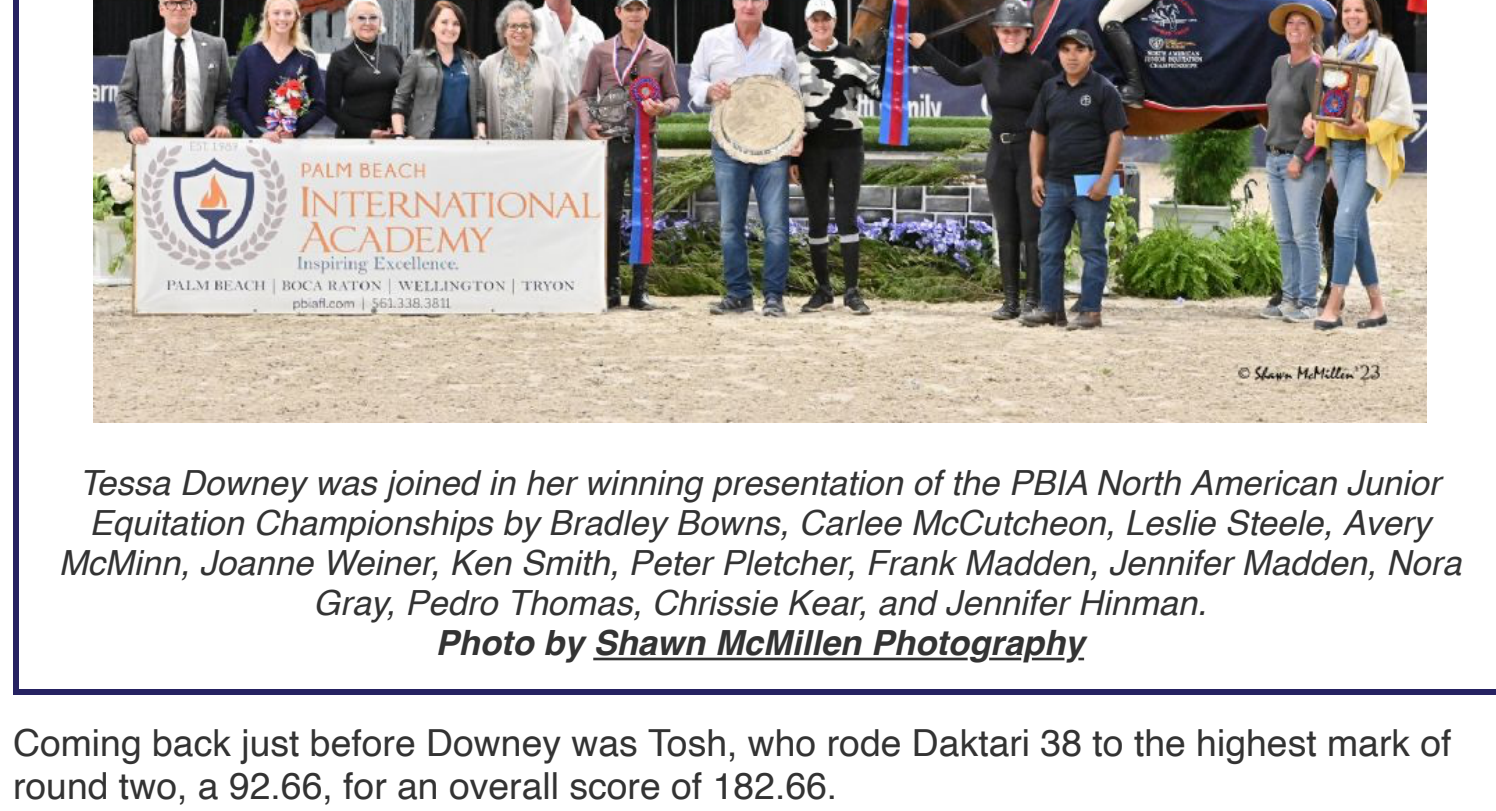
Three panels composed of two judges each awarded scores, and the average of the three resulted in the rider's overall mark. The first panel was made up of Mark Jungherr and Michael Tokaruk. Mark Bone and Chris Wynne sat on the second panel, and the third duo was Jeff Ayers and Virginia Edwards. Ken Krome was the mastermind behind the courses with assistance from Meghan Rawlins.



Tessa Downey and Efendi  
Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography

In the first round, Downey led the way with the high score of 91.66 aboard Efendi, a 15-year-old Holsteiner gelding, owned by Ashland Farms, who, among the numerous accolades on his resume, also won this class with Grady Lyman in the irons in 2018. As the top 20 riders returned in reverse order based on their first-round scores, Downey was last to contest the second-round track, earning an equally impressive score of 92.00 for a two-round total of 183.66.

"Every phase started on the right lead, which just so happened to be our strong suit and something I'm grateful for, because pace is something I've always struggled with," commented Downey, who rides on the equestrian team at University of Georgia. "One word I'd use to describe Efendi is 'magician.' He is amazing. He is able to cover up minute mistakes and make everything blend together. The courses starting on the right lead really helped with that."



Tessa Downey was joined in her winning presentation of the PPIA North American Junior Equitation Championships by Bradley Bowns, Carlee McCutcheon, Leslie Steele, Avery McMinn, Joanne Weiner, Ken Smith, Peter Pletcher, Frank Madden, Jennifer Madden, Nora Gray, Pedro Thomas, Chrissie Kear, and Jennifer Hinman.  
Photo by Shawn McMillen Photography

Coming back just before Downey was Tosh, who rode Dakтари 38 to the highest mark of round two, a 92.66, for an overall score of 182.66.

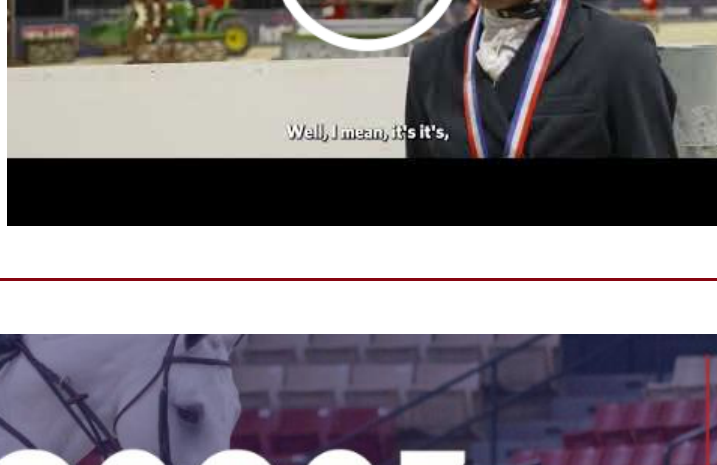
"Going into the second round, I had nothing to lose at that point," said Tosh, who trains with her dad, top hunter rider Hunt Tosh, along with the team at North Run. "It was everything or nothing, so I just went for it, and he was great."

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## WORDS FROM THE WINNERS

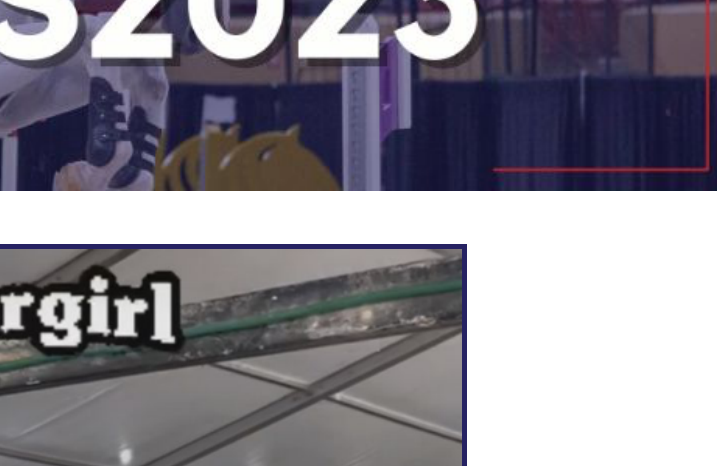
Hear from Tessa Downey following her win in the PPIA North American Junior Equitation Championships!

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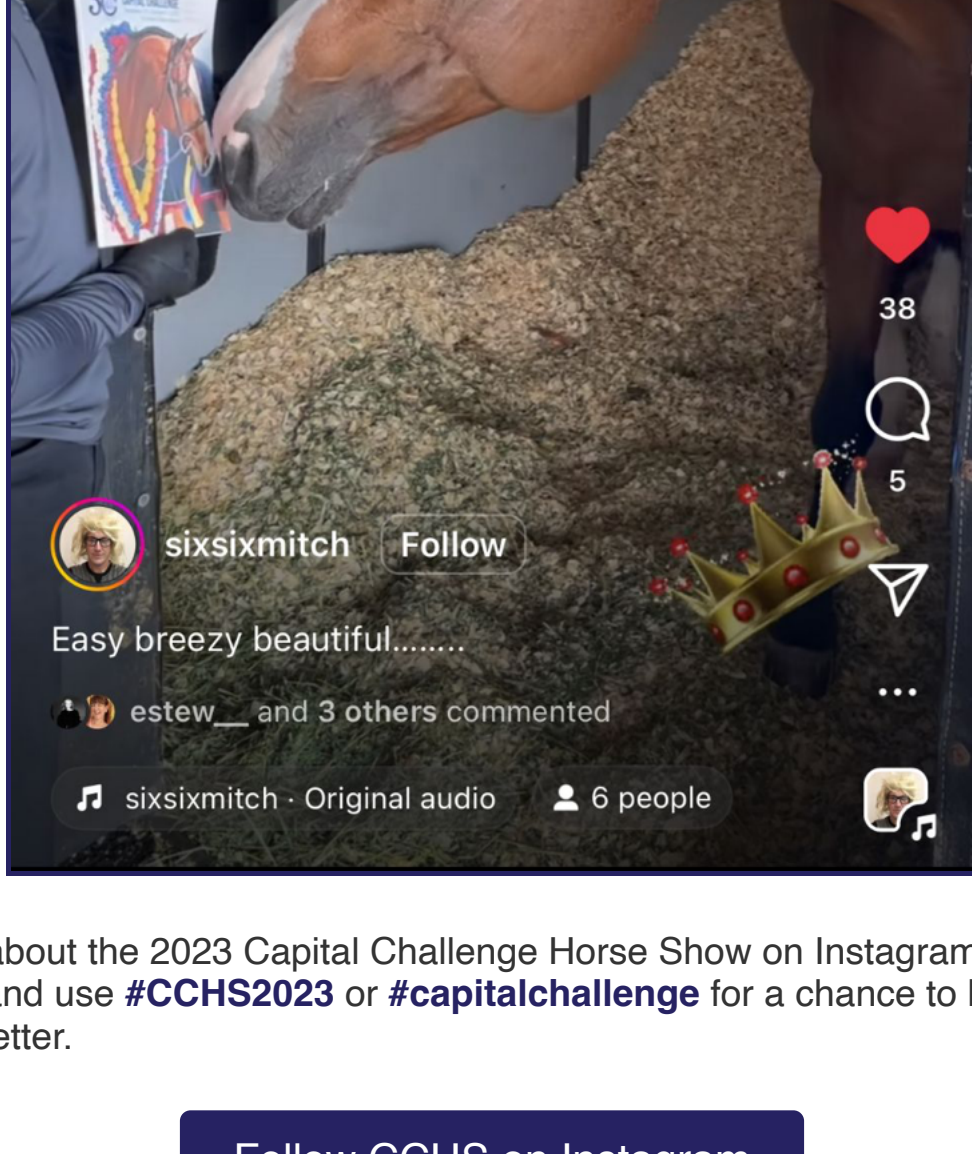


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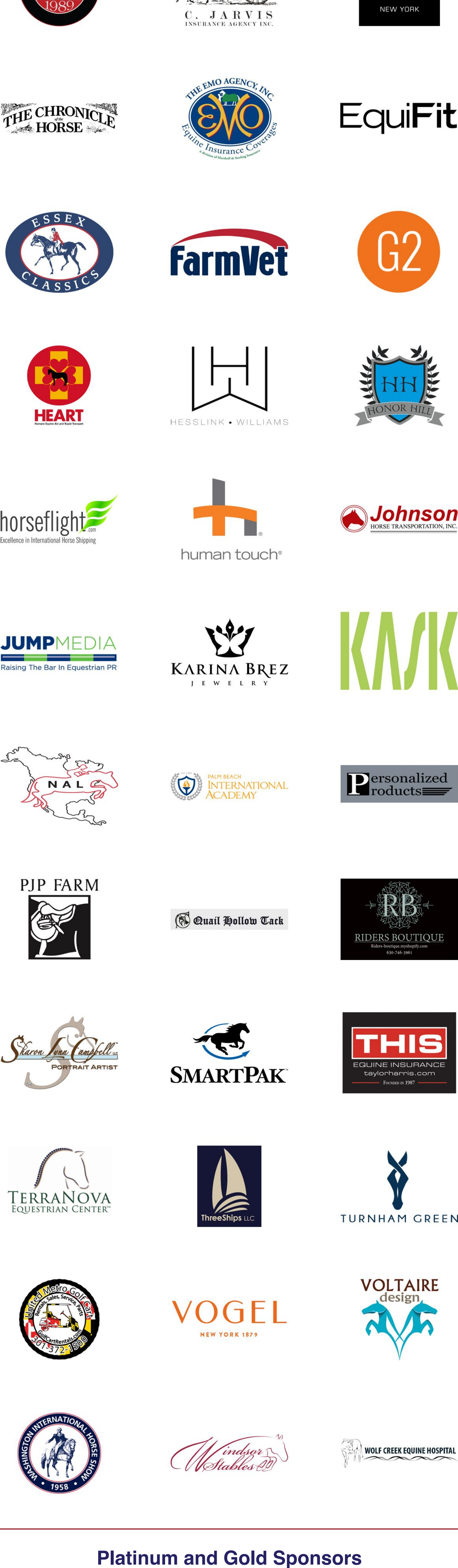
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### About the Capital Challenge Horse Show

The Capital Challenge Horse Show, an official *USEF* Heritage Competition, has a distinct and unique focus on preeminent hunter and equitation competition. The 2023 edition of the Capital Challenge Horse Show will take place from September 28-October 8. The 11 days of competition will include prestigious equitation events, jumper divisions, the World Championship Hunter Rider (WCHR) Finals, the \$25,000 3' and 3'3" Green Hunter North American Championships, and more, with many of the country's best horses and riders competing in junior, amateur, and professional divisions.

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